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26 OCT 1978

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Personnel

FROM: James H. Taylor, Chairman  
Executive Career Service Board

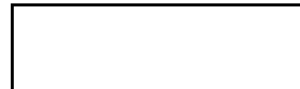
SUBJECT: Comments on the Design of a System to Stimulate  
a Higher Level of Rotational Assignments and  
Transfers

REFERENCE: Memorandum For: Multiple Addressees;  
From: DDCI; Subject: Follow-up to  
[redacted] 29-30 September; dated  
5 October - Item II A 9

1. Rotational assignments into the DCI Area for the purpose of providing broadening experience, new challenges or a needed skill (either to the individual or the unit) are more easily arranged than are permanent career changes. The E Career Service and the DCI Area utilize the "rotational" approach for staffing professional positions [redacted] in the Office of the Comptroller and in the Office of the Inspector General. Rotational assignment possibilities for E careerists outside the DCI Area are less numerous. Except for attorneys and auditors this may not be a serious problem since most other E careerists have had extensive experience in one or more directorates. No doubt the Agency-wide program of designated inter-directorate rotational positions will provide additional opportunities for E careerists. Perhaps the program should be expanded each year by a predetermined percentage to assure vitality.

2. In any revision or expansion of the rotational assignment policy of the Agency, the problem of recognition and credit for service performed outside the confines of the career service or parent organization must be specifically addressed. Unfortunately, today the attitude of some career services and components is that rotational assignments are not very useful experiences for performance of substantive duties back "home". This is reflected in several ways:

a. Non-concurrence in promotion recommendations submitted by the individual's "rotational" office,



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b. lack of interest in ascertaining the level or quality of performance of individuals while on rotational assignment and the lack of effort made by panels when undertaking evaluation exercises to ascertain from the rotational office concerned the quality of performance of their own careerists.

c. Frequently, the lack of discussing with and making available to an employee on rotational assignment a challenging assignment upon return to his parent career service.

3. While rotational assignments may not contribute very much to the enhancement of specific, narrow professional or technical skills, in most cases it does provide an expanded knowledge of other Agency activities and an increased awareness, of the manner in which at least some activities in the Agency mesh with others. The inherent ability of the employee confirmed by demonstrated proficiency in other types of work should justify in many cases serious consideration by his parent service for an assignment not merely of equivalent level to his last assignment, but a position with increased responsibilities. This philosophy and policy should be clearly understood and accepted, hopefully voluntarily, by all career service heads if a viable rotational assignment policy is to be effective in this Agency.

4. After considerable thought, however, I have concluded that there is very little that career services individually can do to stimulate "inter-career service" transfers on a permanent basis. This requires a clear expression of Agency policy and an Agency-wide system to assist individuals who desire change to achieve their objectives.

5. There are several circumstances under which a career service change is desirable either from the individual's point of view, the Agency's or most likely both:

a. The individual feels, internally, the desire -- or even the need -- to do "something different" and has the realistic qualifications to do so.

b. The unit or career service feels that an individual needs or deserves a change to "recharge his batteries" or whose skills are no longer needed insofar as the career service is concerned.

c. The individual who is a "round peg in a square hole" and perhaps even has been since initial employment. There

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may be a round hole somewhere but under the current system a "promotion from within" a unit or component or career service usually takes precedence over the placement of an individual who needs and deserves an assignment.

d. The individual who, through no fault of his own, finds himself/herself without an assignment. His/her career service or component could have been reduced in strength or abolished. He/she could have returned from a long TDY, detail or training assignment and no vacancy is readily available or apparent. Yet the employee usually represents a substantial investment by the Government in recruitment, clearance, training and development.

6. It seems to me that the problem is both one of attitude and mechanics. Attitude represents the parochialism on the part of managers who feel that "to become president you must start here as a messenger boy" or said another way, "you can't go to sea unless you're in the union and can't get in the union unless you've been to sea." It is perceived by many employees that they are not really CIA employees but DDS&T employees or Commo employees or OER/NFAC employees, etc. Until managers accept the fact that there probably are elsewhere in the Agency capable mid-level or upper-level employees who can fill at least a few positions in their units, not much will change these perceptions.

7. The problem of mechanics is perhaps easier to resolve and one which should be highly visible to all employees. Real opportunity for competition for assignment should be made available to all employees at least across office lines, if not directorate boundaries. This probably involves the existence of an honest vacancy announcement system of some kind. Secondly, a senior board with "directed placement" authority should be established to review cases of otherwise competent individuals who through no fault of their own find themselves without assignments. When one thinks of the weeding out process an employee goes through to be hired by the CIA, the cost involved in clearance and re-clearance, the testing and examination drills, the experience and on-the-job training most get, and the institutional loyalty we hope to stimulate and maintain, it seems to me that the firing of an employee for other than misconduct or demonstrable incompetence represents a serious organizational failure which invites resentment and recrimination not to mention excessive cost to the government.

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8. In summary, the rotational assignment issue is not a critical issue in the E Career Service. We have a large number of positions already devoted to this method of staffing. We do need an Agency system to permit E careerists to have rotational assignments. Career change is more difficult but opportunities can be improved first by a change in the "territorial attitude" on the part of managers and career services; second, by establishing a mechanism for "directed placement" on an Agency-wide basis of individuals who find themselves unassigned through no fault of their own; and third, by some sort of a vacancy announcement system -- at first perhaps within directorates and later across Agency lines. (We will comment more on the vacancy notice issue in another paper.)



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